



ZERO BEAT

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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A simplex exercise on Black Friday evening

by LD Steiner

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, has become associated with Christmas shopping: retailers offer discounts on toys and electronics that draw large crowds, but what happens after the shopping is done and amateur radio operators return to their ham shacks? With hot chocolate or eggnog in hand, this is a good time to kick off the Christmas season by making simplex contacts all across the Pikes Peak region.

From his ham shack in Fountain, club president Ken/K0KWH aimed his 2-meter beam antenna northward and called for check-ins to the simplex net, and then went around the roster and allowed each station, in turn, to call for others on the list whom they might not have heard during check-ins. With each station attempting to confirm contact with all others on the list, every operator was able to assemble a list of whom they could reach and whom they could not on 2-meter FM.

But that was just the starting point. After we had a list of participants, we were able to try other bands and modes as well: 70 cm FM, and for those with rigs to support it, we tried single sideband on VHF and UHF as well. We even tried some digital modes: for some stations, the weak-signal JS8Call software-enabled communications enabled keyboard-to-keyboard chats even when FM voice communications were not possible.

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A simplex exercise on Black Friday evening cont.

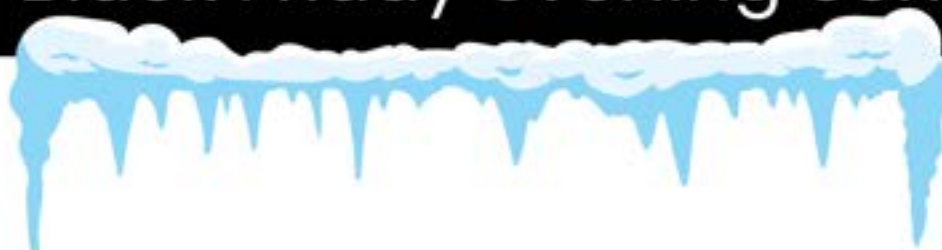
Ken shared these lessons learned from the exercise: "I learned that running 2M FT8 on a 7 Element Yagi mounted just below a Vertical J Pole running 2M FM Simplex does not work well together. I also learned that with enough people spread out over the region we have great capability to communicate via simplex with and without a relay."



Ray/KD8EQA wrote: "Thanks for coordinating the Black Friday Simplex Event... pure fun! In my case, I was standing in my driveway, holding a 5 watt HT and the 3-element Arrow Yagi I won at a past PPRAA Fox Hunt. I've worked 2m stations all over the Colorado Springs area from neighboring SOTA summits, but I wondered how I'd do at ground level. I live on the west side, near Old Colorado City and Garden of the Gods. And to my amazement, I could get good signal reports from Ken/K0KWH in Fountain, LD/W0XLD to the north, and Rick/KE0GVU to the east! All I had to do was point my Yagi in the right direction, and wallah, strong signals, both directions! I really enjoyed the event... thanks again!"

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A simplex exercise on Black Friday evening cont.



LD/W0XLD shared: "Seeing the reach of SSB and FM back-to-back is eye-opening. We usually associate the 70 cm band with FM, but it's amazing how well we can communicate around hills and through the city when we put our radios' available wattage into a bandwidth-efficient SSB signal. For those interested in emergency communications, SSB and digital modes on VHF and UHF may be valuable tools in the toolbox, well worth buying a transceiver capable of supporting them."

Feedback was positive from several participants, so this event is likely to be repeated in 2025 and beyond, for those who would like to improve their stations for VHF and UHF capabilities without relying on repeaters.

FREE Radio Licensing Test Sessions
Second Saturday of every month at 10 am
Pikes Peak Regional
Office of Emergency Management
3755 Mark Dabbling Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
ve@ppraa.org

Christmas party at Edelweiss



Happy New Year to all PPRAA members and friends! Our Christmas party at Edelweiss restaurant on December 11, instead of our usual membership meeting, was a fun opportunity to unwind and remember some of the fun times we had throughout the year. The food was delicious, but as usual, when hams get together, the company was the highlight of the event.



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Christmas party at Edelweiss cont.

President Ken/K0KWH took the opportunity to recognize a few of our members for accomplishments and fun memories throughout 2024:

- David Molter/AD0QD was awarded for being the Elmer of the Year. He has responded to countless calls and emails from members of the public reaching out to our club, helping inquirers find the resources and advice they need to get licensed or solve problems within the amateur radio community.
- Ben Faulring/AB2SG and Karen Faulring/KF0INE were awarded as club ambassadors, facilitating events and representing the hobby well, especially at such activities as fox hunts and at the Megafest.



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Christmas party at Edelweiss cont.

- An "under the noise floor" prize was awarded to Joseph Hodge/K0OF for his many contributions and willingness to lend a hand in many activities throughout the year, faithfully attending club meetings, and helping out in many ways that are not high-profile. Joseph's contributions always help things run smoothly at club events and he doesn't always get recognition for them, but event organizers and the PPRAA board noticed and wanted to make sure he was appreciated.
- Rick Wildman/KE0GVU and Kathy Wildman/AE0UX were presented with a "bent antenna" award for a lesson learned: by sharing their story of a stuck transmitter, their experience became an educational moment for all in the club.
- A net attendance award was given to LD Steiner/W0XLD for consistent net participation on the weekly 2-meter net all year long.

Kathy Wildman was also the winner of a door-prize drawing for a TruSDX QRP transceiver and go-kit, complete with antenna and accessories, generously donated by Jon Cashatt/KJ0CFW.

All attendees were gifted a PPRAA Christmas 2024 ornament, a present from the board.

PPRAA thanks the organizers of the Christmas party and all who attended, and we hope everyone will have fun and successful radio endeavors in 2025.



Winter Field Day 2025

Who: PPRAA will holding an on-site field day. PPRAA members, local amateur radio operators, friends, guests, and elected government officials are invited.

When: Setup: January 24th, not earlier than 0900 MST.

Cumulative set-up time not to exceed 12 hours

Operations: January 25th,

0900 until January 26th 14:59. 30 Hours

Tear Down: January 26th, 15:00 till completed

Where:

Cheyenne Mountain State Park

410 JL Ranch Heights Rd

Colorado Springs, CO 80926

For more information visit:

PPPRA.org and click on Winter Field Day in the top tabs





General Membership meeting (12 FEB 2025) will be both in-person and virtual

Location: Golden Corral
1970 Waynoka Rd, Colorado Springs

The business meeting starts at 7 PM, but get your dinner and beverage of choice and check in any time after 6 PM for a social hour. Club members check your email for info or email Officers@PPRAA.org to receive the Zoom information.

Coming in Feb.

PPRAA JS8 Call Event

Watch PPRAA.org for more information

Contact Zero Beat

Do you have photos of PPRAA events you'd like to share, or news from the ham radio world that the club might like to hear? Please email zerobeat@ppraa.org to share your ideas and pictures.